The Hidden Truth About Joseph McCarthy

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Daniel J. Flynn

For generations of American students, the name Joe McCarthy and not Joe Stalin has been synonymous with evil. A practitioner of "black arts," a "demon," "ogreish," and a "seditionist" are a few of the descriptions of him handed down to us from his first major biographer. The passage of time hasn't tempered these hysterical reactions.

The late senator, the story goes, created a climate of fear in the early 1950s by conducting a witchhunt that called liberals "Communists" and Communists "spies." We now know better. The witches were real. Today, even many of McCarthy's most extreme and ridiculed statements—alleging "a conspiracy on a scale so immense" or lambasting "twenty years of treason" in Democratic administrations—seem, if anything, to understate the pervasiveness of Communist infiltration of the U.S. government and the enormity of its damage.

Documents from the Soviet Union's archives, USSR spy messages deciphered by the U.S. government's Venona program, and declassified FBI files and wiretaps all prove that hundreds of U.S. officials were agents of an international Communist conspiracy. If these previously inaccessible documents shed light on only a few of McCarthy's specific charges, they certainly vindicate his general charge that security in the U.S. government was lax and that large numbers of Communists penetrated positions of great importance.

Alger Hiss, Roosevelt foreign policy advisor and first secretary general of the United Nations; Harry Dexter White, assistant secretary of the Treasury and Truman's appointee as director of the International Monetary Fund; and Lauchlin Currie, administrative assistant to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, have all been confirmed, among hundreds of others, to have been agents of the USSR. In addition to the multitudes of executive branch agents, we also know of at least three Congressmen working clandestinely for the Soviet Union during this time period.

Government was hardly the only domain targeted by Soviet espionage. Influential media figures like I.F. Stone of *The Nation*, Michael Straight, editor of *The New Republic*, and Pulitzer Prize Winner Walter Duranty of *The New York Times* were actually agents of the Soviet Union. Prominent unions like the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the Screen Actors Guild were dominated by Communists. Even major industrialists like Armand Hammer did their part by laundering Soviet money to domestic U.S. Communists.

Despite many of these new revelations, academic opinion of "tail-gunner Joe," the central enemy of domestic subversion in the early 1950s, has remained static. This consensus had gone unchallenged within academic circles until the release of *Joseph McCarthy: Reexamining the Life and Legacy of America's Most Hated Senator* by George Mason University History Professor Arthur Herman.

In *Joseph McCarthy*, Arthur Herman writes that the "standard claim that McCarthy had never exposed a real Communist in the government" is "demonstrably false." A perusal of the major books on McCarthy reveals that this statement itself sets Herman's work apart.

McCarthy's "critics were right," Rutgers Professor David Oshinsky remarks in *A Conspiracy So Immense*, "he never uncovered a Communist." Thomas Reeves of the University of Wisconsin opines in

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The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy that "McCarthy did not have a single name." Robert Griffith maintains in *The Politics of Fear*, "Each of McCarthy's charges was fraudulent." "It happened to be a fact," boasted Richard Rovere in *Senator Joe McCarthy*, "that not one certifiable Communist had been disclosed as working for the government" as a result of the junior senator from Wisconsin's efforts.

Herman dissents and offers up Owen Lattimore, Edward Posniak, Mary Jane Keeney, Gustavo Duran, and John Carter Vincent as among the cases in which McCarthy had things essentially right.

Among one of the first names McCarthy named was that of Mary Jane Keeney. Mrs. Keeney worked in various sensitive overseas State Department jobs during the 1940s before settling in at the United Nations. Intercepted Venona cables, as well as her own diaries, prove that Keeney and her husband were Soviet agents. In February of 1950 McCarthy understated matters by labeling this agent of a foreign power merely a Communist. By the end of that year she was forced out of her post at the United Nations.

For anti-anticommunists, McCarthy's charges against Gustavo Duran stood as "proof of the insanity of the red scare." Michael Straight, Duran's brother-in-law and editor of *The New Republic*, would use the pages of his magazine to promote Duran's supposed innocence and McCarthy's assumed recklessness. Testimony by many attesting to Duran's Stalinism and work for the Spanish Communist secret police during the Spanish Civil War—even a picture of him in a Communist uniform—was dismissed as Francoist propaganda. One would think that Straight's later admission to being a Soviet agent should have at least sparked a second look into this McCarthy allegation by historians.

Besides Herman, there haven't been any takers. Herman asserts that Duran was "not only a Communist but a central figure in Stalin's cold-blooded purge of his Trotskyite and anarchist allies during the Spanish Civil War." Later, Duran's supporters would lamely point out that Duran, like Mrs. Keeney, was technically no longer a State Department employee since he worked at the United Nations. The fact that he, like Keeney, was paid by the State Department and was definitely a Communist didn't factor into their passage of judgement on McCarthy's charges against Duran.

More so than any other witness, Annie Lee Moss purportedly exposed the cruelty and recklessness of Joseph McCarthy. Moss, who somehow jumped from an Army cafeteria worker to a clerk in the Pentagon code room, was labeled by McCarthy to be a loyalty risk. A middle-aged African American woman who walked to give her testimony with an elderly gait, Moss quickly gained the sympathy of Democrats on McCarthy's committee. When asked about her knowledge of Karl Marx, Moss asked, "Who's that?" The copies of *The Daily Worker* that arrived at her house were sent to the wrong address, she maintained. There were three Annie Lee Mosses in Washington, DC, her defenders intoned, so perhaps McCarthy had gotten the wrong woman.

McCarthy-haters seized on the Moss case as a club with which to beat anti-Communists. Edward R. Murrow devoted his weekly "See It Now" program to Mrs. Moss's plight, while Missouri Senator Stu Symington told the witness that if she lost her job with the Army she could always come work for him. Just a year after McCarthy's death it was revealed that he had indeed got the right woman. There was only one Annie Lee Moss in Washington, DC and it was the same Annie Lee Moss whose name and address appeared on the rolls of the local Communist Party. A former FBI agent even attested to seeing her actual Communist Party membership card from years earlier. If one U.S. Senator should be destroyed for allegedly making false accusations of Communism, what should the penalty be for another who announces to the world his willingness to give a Communist a job in his office?

If a dishonest characterization of McCarthy is the largest common denominator among anti-anticommunists, then hypocrisy is a close second.

So-called McCarthyite devices, such as the Smith Act and the House Committee on Un-American Activities, were creations not of Cold Warriors, but of New Deal Democrats. When they were used against fascists or even Trotskyites, Herman reminds readers, the Communists applauded and at times even

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aided and abetted the government. Only years later when the tables were turned did liberals change their tune about the methods they created. All that mattered was whose ox was being gored.

After McCarthy first made his charges public in February of 1950, Senate Democrats demanded that he stop hiding behind closed-door sessions and name names. Once McCarthy did what they asked, these very same Senate Democrats pounced on him for making charges without giving the accused the opportunity to defend themselves.

McCarthy's enemies—supposed champions of civil liberties—tapped his phone, intercepted his incoming personal mail, placed a paid spy in his office, and illegally released his tax returns to the press (resulting in a large refund!). Herman recounts the amusing story of Paul Hughes, one that has been curiously forgotten by most McCarthy biographers. Hughes, a confidence man, convinced members of the Democratic National Committee, famous labor lawyer Joseph Rauh, and the *Washington Post* that he was a spy in McCarthy's office and that he had evidence of major lawbreaking by the Senator. Rauh and a DNC leader paid more than \$10,000 for the information, and the Post prepared a twelve-part series on the allegations, which included a bizarre tale about McCarthy stockpiling weapons in the basement of the Capitol, with an obvious implication of a coup. After nine-months of feeding absurd stories about McCarthy to liberals hungry for anything that would defame their enemy, Hughes was revealed as a fraud. The massive *Post* series was killed at the last minute.

"McCarthy opponents liked to claim that what made McCarthy reek in the nostrils of American democracy was not what McCarthy was doing but how he did it: the public airing of unsubstantiated charges, the use of smear and innuendo, and 'confidential informants, dossiers, political spies,' as Joseph Rauh himself had written," Herman observes. "The Hughes case proves that some of them were willing to do at least the same to him."

Although McCarthy is charged with a failure to distinguish between liberals and Communists, it was generally liberals, Herman points out, who couldn't recognize the differences. It was Franklin Roosevelt, after all, who brought Alger Hiss to Yalta and Harry Truman who promoted Harry Dexter White to head the International Monetary Fund. Both Truman and Roosevelt entrusted these Soviet agents with top positions long after they had been told that Hiss and White were involved in espionage.

During the time that the Senate was debating whether to condemn McCarthy, Andrei Vishinsky, prosecutor for Stalin's show trials, passed away after having sent scores of people to their deaths for crimes they didn't commit. "McCarthy had not sent one person to jail. Yet by a terrible irony of fate," Herman notes, "it is his name, not Vishinsky's, that has been universally remembered and reviled as the symbol of an error of terror and suspicion."

This February 9, marks the 50th anniversary of McCarthy's famous Wheeling, West Virginia, address. The five decades that have passed since this earthshattering speech have seen an unending academic assault not just on McCarthy, but on just about any figure who took the view that Communism was inherently evil. Arthur Herman's *Joseph McCarthy: Reexamining the Life and Legacy of Americas Most Hated Senator* is a much needed antidote to the many propagandistic screeds that have made McCarthy a bogeyman in academic circles and beyond. Willing to point out McCarthy's flaws and his strengths, Herman offers up a view of McCarthy detached from the hysteria surrounding so many other works on the subject.

It is folly to think that Joe McCarthy, like J. Parnell Thomas, Martin Dies, and A. Mitchell Palmer before him, was attacked because he smeared innocents. Joe McCarthy's real crime was calling Communists precisely what they were: Communists.

TOPICS: Heated Discussion

KEYWORDS: arthur; arthurherman; flynn; herman; mccarthy; murrow; reds Did we ever find out if Murrow had more than sympathy for communists? 1 posted on by John Filson

r pooted on by commit moon

http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-backroom/1439582/posts

[Post Reply | Private Reply | View Replies]

To: WmShirerAdmirer

ping

2 posted on by John Filson [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 1 | View Replies]

To: John Filson

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Then I'm proud to be in the same company as ole Joe, because I've never been able to distinguish liberals from communist either.

3 posted on by lunarbicep ("Only in America do we have drive up ATM's with braille on them") [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 1 | View Replies]

To: lunarbicep

I think there are liberals with good intentions and even good ethics. It's the liberals without one or the other (or neither) that really seem indistinguishable to me.

4 posted on by John Filson [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 3 | View Replies]

To: lunarbicep

The Real McCarthy Record http://www.thenewamerican.com/tna/1996/vo12no18/vo12no18_mccarthy.htm

5 posted on by endthematrix ("an ominous vacancy" fills this space) [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 3 | View Replies]

To: endthematrix

great link... thank You

6 posted on by lunarbicep ("Only in America do we have drive up ATM's with braille on them") [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 5 | View Replies]

To: lunarbicep

want to make a bumper sticker that reads, "McCarthy was right" in big letters and then in small letters below, "and so was Lt Calley"

7 posted on by wildcatf4f3 (whats wrong with a draft?)
[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 6 | View Replies]

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To: John Filson; wildcatf4f3

Is there a reason for posting this in the "smoky back room"? You will have greater numbers of response and more importantly readers in "breaking news".

Good idea about the bumper sticker. Did you know Lt. Calley?

"All that mattered was whose ox was being gored."

This is still how the liberals conduct politics.

JOE MACARTHY WAS RIGHT AND IT IS TRUE TODAY ...
THE GOVERNMENT IS FILLED WITH MANY COMMUNISTS.
especially the State department
8 posted on by Countyline
[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 7 | View Replies]

To: Countyline

Breaking news just didn't seem appropriate, heh! I don't mind. It's the quality of readers and responses that matter to me.

9 posted on by John Filson

[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 8 | View Replies]

To: John Filson

You may be right that some liberals have good intentions and good ethics, but they all drink the KoolAid.

10 posted on by YHAOS (Western morons are more dangerous than Islamic lunatics)

[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 4 | View Replies]

To: YHAOS

Ideals are always accompanied by a point of diminished returns. Some people can't see that some of their ideals are trumped by other priorities.

11 posted on by John Filson

[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 10 | View Replies]

To: John Filson

Ideals are always accompanied by a point of diminished returns. Some people can't see that some of their ideals are trumped by other priorities.

12 posted on by YHAOS (Western morons are more dangerous than Islamic lunatics)

[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 11 | View Replies]

To: Countyline

If Sen Joseph McCarthy was alive today he would simply say regarding communists in government, 'I told you so!'.

13 posted on by M. Espinola (Freedom is never free)
[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 8 | View Replies]

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To: lunarbicep

McCarthy had nothing to do with the House on UnAmerican Activities – yet to this day the myth is believed that he dragged innocent people in front of it. Too true that FDR was a disgrace and a communist. His administration was riddled with them. Under his watch the Soviets seized nuclear technology – with the aid of Communist party members within his own Administration. It took a Soviet defector in Canada to reveal that Soviet agents had deeply rooted themselves in America.

14 posted on by Sam Gamgee

[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 3 | View Replies]

To: John Filson; Tailgunner Joe

Good post - I'm sure TGJ will be interested. Thanks.

15 posted on by 2 Kool 2 Be 4-Gotten (Is your problem ignorance or apathy? I don't know and I don't care.) [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 1 | View Replies]

To: 2 Kool 2 Be 4-Gotten; WmShirerAdmirer

Good post - I'm sure TGJ will be interested. Thanks.... You're welcome. I didn't get a response back from WmShirerAdmirer, who inspired me to look into Edward R. Murrow's character assassination attacks on McCarthy with his profile. Yes, I think journalism was better in those days. But we didn't have blogging and the pajama cadre to crosscheck assumptions. Murrow was wrong. He was a liberal, what else can we say? They're predisposed to a certain inability to recognize true evil while they battle invisible threats.

16 posted on by John Filson

[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 15 | View Replies]

To: John Filson

"I think there are liberals with good intentions and even good ethics."

These are the stooges. There are 3 levels: the inner circle is the inner group of hard core communists who know what they want and how to do it. Just outside that circle is a much larger group that has a clue of what's going on. The biggest group is the stooges. They have been persuaded somehow by the the 2nd group which could be the media, or whatever. The stooges have good intentions but they don't have a clue what they are really working for. It is from these stooges that the group grows larger but it is always guided by that inner circle.

17 posted on by jwh_Denver (Looks like we're going to have start working for a new "What A Country"?) [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 4 | View Replies]

To: jwh_Denver

My theory is a bit more subtle. I think our western ideals have serious limits. You can take any one of them too far. Would a nation with the values we have today, which are supposedly based on fairness, egalitarianism, and the Golden Rule have been able to settle the west? No. Would we even have been able to win WWII? I'm not sure about that! You're talking about symptoms. I'm talking about root causes. It's all about priorities. We have to choose: us or them. I choose us, meaning the survival of the west, the survival of America, and the core beliefs we hold about freedom's true source. Liberals are deluding themselves that they know better. They're living in a 'Dances with Wolves' fantasy world.

18 posted on by John Filson
[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 17 | View Replies]

To: John Filson

I agree with you that "The Golden Rule" has to tossed out the window at times. Biblically, the "The Golden Rule was put aside for good reasons. Obviously when it's war you've got to. And your "us or them" I agree with too.

We the people of the United States can have our property confiscated under the guise of drug enforcement. Or that bogus recent SCOTUS decision. We can be arrested with no cause under the "Terrorist Act". The illusion is we have rights when we lawfully we don't have any. Is the government the root cause? I don't think so. There is a group operating under the idiots that we see running it. That is the inner circle calling the shots. Everthing is in place for a tyrannical government if it isn't already so. And I fear that unless we do whatever is needed including taking it to them with guns if necessary our nation as we know it is lost.

19 posted on by jwh_Denver (Looks like we're going to have start working for a new "What A Country"?) [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 18 | View Replies]

To: jwh_Denver

We're not lost yet. We have "conservatives" in the majority in Washington. We have forums, blogs, and E-mail. We have a president with SCOTUS appointments. And we have National Review, Weekly Standard, FOX News, World Net Daily, Rush Limbaugh, and Frontpage. We also have the second amendment in most parts of the US. This is a time for statesmanship and debate, a time for leadership. But as the Swiss illustrated for our Founding Fathers, free men must remain armed. It's more our duty now than ever.

20 posted on by John Filson

[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 19 | View Replies]

To: John Filson

Very well said. Amen.

21 posted on by jwh_Denver (Looks like we're going to have start working for a new "What A Country"?) [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 20 | View Replies]

To: John Filson

Thanks for the ping originally and later the compliment.

Wasn't able to read the article you posted or respond earlier because of lack of time here. I did read the article this morning and it is a real eye opener.

Unfortunately I didn't know much about Joe McCarthy and only a little about Murrow (mostly about his association w/ Shirer and the WWII CBS broadcast. When I'm not very well educated in personalities and news worthy events I tend to stay out of the discussions in order not to embarrass myself.

(I tend to jump to conclusions often and am trying to delete this from my methods of reading, posting and replying.)

Followed a thread between you and a couple of other Freepers on a tangent of something I posted last week. It was a good discussion to read, but I didn't feel I knew enough about it to add my two cents.

One other thing I should admit to, just picked up a book of Shire's broadcasts from Berlin from local library (it was published within the last couple of years) and discovered that most of these are not "straight and hard news". He often speaks from a personal point of view and in regards to what he is observing and experiencing on the streets. There isn't too much fact to verify his observations, (he was heavily

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censored)unless he was given a copy of degrees that the Nazis were putting into effect daily. So I must admit that from today's perspective on journalism he might be considered a Liberal.

I have to say the big reason I am such an admirer is that in reading his books I can understand the political webs and associations that existed (it's not the preponderance of names and society or party connections that were so cut and dry in my 20th century European World History classes I took in college. Shirer's reports made me see what he saw, and as an American feel what he felt. I also feel that he had a sane,logical and honest perception of what was occurring, something that seems lost to reporters today. Black was black and white was white and you didn't question what your "common sense" or your basic sense of morality told you. You didn't go around each issue and personality making excuses for them, or try to get people to "understand why psychologically or sociologically it happened. You just reported the facts, truthfully and honestly with little or no commentary. The 'chips would fall where they may', 'the proof would be in the pudding' and readers would be able to make up their own minds of how they felt given what they knew.

Thanks again.
22 posted on by WmShirerAdmirer
[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 16 | View Replies]

To: WmShirerAdmirer

The McCarthy story is painful for America. I hope that as history moves forward, we'll understand it better. He was right to try to root out communism from our government, and he was proven right about many of his accusations. The seeds of our current culture war were already growing by then, and people who misunderstood McCarthy were quick to accuse him of exceeding his authority. We had just won a world war against fascism in which government power had been abused, and so liberals were ever on the lookout for men in government who might follow suit. They didn't realize that they were laying the foundation for more tyranny as they continued in FDR's footsteps.

I think we have to keep discussing the "McCarthy experience," which Murrow truly pictured in the American mind with his critical commentaries about the anti-communist movement. I think people like Ann Coulter are right, but we need to go a step further in analyzing why Murrow wanted to attack McCarthy. It's in this very knee-jerk response that we find today's liberals demonizing the Bush administration's Iraq war and taxation policies. They're quick to yell "fascist!" or the equivalent; that's not much different from what was happening during the McCarthy backlash. Why? Finding out will help us explain the need to limit government as an essential for protecting America to ordinary people. Coulter and fans will be quick to say that liberal attacks are due to their treason; again, the fact that so many liberals are well-meaning reveals a need to dig deeper. What leads to such simplistic criticism of America's patriots? Idealism, inherent to the American character of wanting to right all wrongs and solve all problems may be part of it.

William Shirer opposed the Truman Doctrine, and Edward R. Murrow fired him from CBS over his opposition, according to wikipedia. Wikipedia doesn't say why, and a quick search on the Internet didn't reveal any copies of Shirer's radio texts or his commentary against Truman. One would suspect that Shirer was a liberal "America firster."

Murrow may have been more anti-communist than his critics realized. Again, he may have simply been offering a knee-jerk reaction to McCarthy's investigations. That his attacks on McCarthy were termed "television's finest hour," is an insight into why so many journalists think that the Watergate investigations were proof that the press would save America from any form of government "evil."

These reporters served a valuable purpose before and during WWII. Studying why they lent the force of their new political power to destroy such a fast friend of the nation will help us to understand the MSM's

death grip on the west today. They believed they were right. They had our best interest in mind. And they castigated one of the most patriotic Americans of the 20th century in the process. A dedication to fairness is ordinarily a valuable quality in a journalist. What went wrong? What is going wrong with our MSM today? Unlocking these questions might help America and the west to survive. I don't think Coulter has the answers -- yet.

23 posted on by John Filson [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 22 | View Replies]

To: M. Espinola

"If Sen Joseph McCarthy was alive today he would simply say regarding communists in government, 'I told you so!'."

Marxists were masquerading as libs, and were finally able to convert the New left of the 60s, using vietnam as the lightning rod.

I've been using this tagline for a while now.

24 posted on by Voir Dire (Modern liberalism is a Communist plot)

[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 13 | View Replies]

To: Voir Dire

"Marxists were masquerading as libs, and were finally able to convert the New left of the 60s, using vietnam as the lightning rod."

Now the communists, which never admit to being, conspire with the Muslim terrorist enemy, solely because the Islamists are 'anti-American', actually naively believing their various forms of assistance to radical Islam would spare them from being bumped off as 'infidels'.

Since Senator McCarthy was very instrumental in exposing their evil deeds at all levels of government, Hollywood & other important aspects of American life, he remains the Lefties primary wiping boy.

Great tag-line!

25 posted on by M. Espinola (Freedom is not free) [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 24 | View Replies]

To: M. Espinola

The Reds, like the muzzies, would love to see Christianity eliminated, and cetainly have some common goals.

I have forwarded this link to someone to check out its authenticity, but when you look at this list of commie goals, and see how much of it has been accomplished by the rats, it is...well, judge for yourself.

http://www.glennbeck.com/news/03212002.shtml 26 posted on by Voir Dire (Modern liberalism is a Communist plot) [Post Reply | Private Reply | To 25 | View Replies]

To: Voir Dire

The communist rats have accomplished far too many of their subversive goals.

Once they got this one everything really began down hill.

28) 'Eliminate prayer or any phase of religious expression in the schools on the grounds that it violates the

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principle of "separation of church and state."

In the not too distant future this one will haunt US.

6) 'Provide American aid to all nations regardless of Communist domination.' (Red China)

The commies continue working on this one.

45) 'Repeal the Connally Reservation so the US can not prevent the World Court from seizing jurisdiction over domestic problems. Give the World Court jurisdiction over domestic problems. Give the World Court jurisdiction over nations and individuals alike.'

27 posted on by M. Espinola (Freedom is not free)
[Post Reply | Private Reply | To 26 | View Replies]

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